Retro #13: SSC SECOND IN CATHOLIC NATIONALS IN 1924 MARCH MADNESS

More than 2,000 fans gathered at the L&N Depot in Bay St. Louis to send the Saint Stanislaus basketball team off to Chicago on March 24, 1924. Led by Brother Peter Basso, athletic director, and Coach Forster Commagere, the eight players who had been crowned Southern Catholic Champions, boarded the Pan-American Deluxe while the school band played *Dixie.* According *The Sea Coast Echo, "the whole town was out for the occasion, old and young, big and little, mothers with babes in arms, and toddling grandpas leaning on their sticks. Beautiful girls wearing the College colors flitted here and there, raising their voices in praise of the Rock-A-Chaws."*

Playing before a crowd of more than 10,000 at Loyola in Chicago, SSC's exhausted eight players finished second in the national Catholic finals, losing 19-25 to the 16-member squad of Marquette. Dubbed the *Dixie Flashes* after defeating the number one seed in the first round, SSC's classy team won the hearts of the crowd. The Rock-A-Chaws also won the coveted trophy for best sportsmanship of the 32 teams in the tournament. Mayor Dever of Chicago in making the presentation noted that SSC won the Silver Sportsmanship Cup not because they were national runners-up but because they got all 24 votes of the officials in a secret ballot. So impressed by the clean play of the Rock-A-Chaws, the judges decided that St. Stanislaus should keep the trophy permanently rather than having it contested annually as was the custom. The Silver Cup verified that SSC lived up to its motto: *"Sincerity, Sportsmanship, and Courtesy."*

Mayor Webb declared April 2, 1924, Rock-A-Chaw Day in Bay St. Louis and granted all public and private schools in Bay St. Louis a holiday to welcome the returning SSC team home. Hundreds of people met the team at the depot, and after a pep rally with music by the band, the mayor led a procession of more than 100 decorated cars through town to the college. That night 1,200 fans packed the school's newly constructed gym to honor the coaches and players for their performance and especially for winning the Silver Cup for their outstanding sportsmanship during the entire tournament. The Silver Cup has survived several hurricanes and sits on display in the lobby of the Brother Peter Memorial Gym. For the coming week, however, in keeping with March Madness, it will be displayed in the school library.

Thanks to *The Sea Coast Echo* for preserving such great memories for St. Stanislaus and Bay St. Louis. Write-ups in the March and April 1924 issues can be read on the Internet Archives website <https://archive.org/search?query=sea+coast+echo>

1924 Championship Team

Top row: Charles Jaubert, Anthony Schiro, Coach Commagere, and Roger Haydel. First row: Norton Haas, Anthony Lanassa, Francis Martin (captain), Henry Bonura (all-tournament team), and Fred Welsch

AWARDED
ST. STANISLAUS COLLEGE
LOYOLA UNIVERSITY
1924

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BAY ST. LOUIS, MISSISSIPPI, SATURDAY, APRIL 5, 1924.

RETURN OF S. S. C. TEAM IS OCCASION FOR CELEBRATION

Basketball Team Returns Home From Chicago Tournament With Handsome Silver Cup Awarded For Best Sportsmanship—Eagerly Welcomed By Crowd.

NO GREATER OVATION TENDERED CAESAR'S LEGIONS.

Reception Followed at Night at College Gym—Entire City Invited and Joined in Spirit of Occasion—E. J. Gex, Chairman of Occasion.

Wednesday, April 2nd, was a day that will go down in the history of Bay St. Louis with a burst of glory that will never fade. It was Rock-a-Chaw Day!

The great basketball team that represented St. Stanislaus College—and Bcy St. Louis—at the Chicago Tournament was returning home with honors, and the whole town turned out en masse to bid them welcome. Caesar's victorious return to Rome was not more heartily and sincerely acclaimed than were these athletic lads by those at home who awaited them.

Eager Crowds at Depot.

Long before the time of arrival of the L. & N.'s famous train, the Pan-American, hundreds of people crowded the station. Then a hundred gayly-bedecked automobiles and trucks, flying the Red and Black colors of S. S. C., were parked at and about the depot. Bands of music played popular airs, while college yells and songs proclaimed the true spirit of the momentous occasion.

The throng was a happy one indeed, and could not have been more so had the team won the championship.

After a delay of half an hour over schedule time, the train arrived. There was a rush for the coach containing the Rock-a-Chaws, heads and shoulders protruded thru the open windows.

Team Carried Off.

Stalwart shoulders pushed their way through and as the players emerged they were lifted on high and carried to the Scenger's Co. tally-ho, which bore the heroes, with Grand Marshal Mayor Webb and Frank Martin and a band of music composed of the Maccabees and College players. The Supreme Band was also in attendance.

Without delay the great parade started—a parade the equal of which Bay St. Louis has never seen; songs and College Rahs blended with the music and filled the air. Through all the streets they went, circling the town and spreading their joys to its every nook.

All schools having declared a holiday, the day was spent in jollification.

On Monday a meeting of the loyal fans had been called at the College Gym and a big crowd answered the summons.

Mr. E. J. Gex was made chairman and he promptly advised the people that the business in hand was to devise means and plans for the Rock-a-Chaw welcome. Proper committees were appointed and when it was suggested that a collection be taken up to defray the expenses, Mayor Webb passed the hat around and in less than five minutes had a sufficient amount to meet the proposed expenses. The ladies in attendance promised cakes and one can readily grasp the situation when the fact is known that fifty-four beautiful cakes were brought to the free-for-all banquet.

Great Crowd at Gym.

On Wednesday, at 8:30 p.m., more than 1,200 people packed the big Gym. On the stage, arranged in semi-circle, were seated the President, Bro. Lambert; Vice President, Bro. Peter, Coach Commagere, Chairman Gex and the Rock-a-Chaw team, composed of Captain Fanny Martin, "Big Zeke" Bonura, Heydel, Schiro, Jaubert, LaNoue, Welsh and Haase.

Beautiful Boodeker Trophy.

In the center of the stage, on a table, the great trophy captured by the team was on exhibition. A beautiful Loving Cup of some twenty inches in height with the inscription:

The Chas. J. Boodeker Cup,
Won By
St. Stanislaus Basketball Team
For
Highest Grade Sportsmanship
At the National Catholic Scholarship
Basketball Tournament
At Chicago
—1924—

Calling the great throng to order, Chairman Gex, in well chosen and eloquent words, welcomed the team home in the name of Bay St. Louis. He dwelt on the wonderful record of old S. S. C. and her athletes, and, pointing to the great trophy, declared that while they did not win the championship, they brought back an honor that in his estimation was of far greater value, for it redounded not only to their prowess on the court but attested beyond measure to their moral qualities as well.

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A fectious member of one of the executive department rooms in this city, has weigh the astonishing total of two and a half ounces. Two and a half ounces of lard in twelve weeks! But think, man! It could have been worse. Besides it could have been revealed and the mere flesh ones killed in committee and the more sensitive revealed, the color of us are. After all we ought to be thankful that there are only two and a half ounces this far.

DIXIE FLASHES WHO TOOK CHICAGO STRONG.

COACH FORSTER COMMAGERE AND "PRIDE OF DIXIE ATHLETES."

Top Row—Left to Right: Charles Jaubert, Anthony Schiro, Forster Commagere, coach; Roger Haydel.

Lower Row—Norton Haas, Anthony Lanassa, Francis ("Fannie Martin") Martin, captain; Henry Bonura, Fred Welsch.

St. Stanislaus College, Bay St. Louis, and all Dixie where concerned, are justly proud and enthusiastic over the good showing of the team made in the first National Catholic High School Championship Basketball Tournament, which ended in Chicago Saturday night.

The boys pictured above by The Echo received a special cup for their splendid showing and were further honored by having Forward Bonura placed on the "all-tournament team" by the officials.

The Mississippi boys showed good passing in the final game with Marquette, but their goal shooting was ragged and their opponents won by a score of 25 to 7. Immediately after the game both teams were awarded beautiful cups, Marquette receiving the Mumbelt trophy and silver basketball and St. Stanislaus receiving the Boodecker cup for sportsmanship. Mayor Dever, of Chicago, presented the cup to the Mississippi College team. Mayor Dever's presentation address appears elsewhere in this issue of The Echo. It was made Mr. Stanislaus by unanimous vote of the twenty-four officials of the meet.

The "all-tournament team" was selected by Mike Griffin head official, and his assistants comprising Marshall, of Cathedral High, Lincoln, Neb., and O'Donnel, of Marquette, and Lee, of Dehalle, guards. Bonura played the pivot position, but his high scoring of 44 points forced him to be all-forward.

CITIZEN OF WAVELAND INTERESTED IN GULFPORT BUSINESS.

Judge Farrar Forms Partnership and Engages In Manufacturing Business—Condiments Are Put Up Under Names Gulf Coast Mfg. Co.

Judge J. Q. Farrar, prominent and well known resident of Waveland, and the owner of Farrar's Sub-Division, has entered into a partnership with F. A. Barberitz, business man of Gulfport, under the firm name of Gulf Coast Manufacturing Company, manufacturers of table relishes and other condiments, declared by knowing ones to be of fine flavor and superior merit. Such articles as mustard, chow-chow, peanut butter, mayonaise, pickles and relishes of all kinds will find ready sale. Not only the contents are appetizing and dainty, but the jars and bottles used will be of the most attractive form and labels and cape will be fully in keeping with the idea and plan and to make the articles wholly saleable.

Judge Farrar is well known for his ability and integrity, and his newest venture into the business world will no doubt meet with that success to which both he and his partner are so deservedly entitled.

FORCE OF WORKMEN BUSY IN ST. MARY'S CEMETERY.

Monday Morning Bright and Early Witnessed Force of Men Busy Putting Place in Order and Attractive Appearance.

Monday morning, bright and early, witnessed a force of workmen busily engaged in the work of putting St. Mary's Cemetery in order. It will be remembered the Ladies' Woodmen Circle generously donated $65.00 to help defray this cost and for the regular upkeep of the cemetery. Mrs. E. Boudin, chairman of the committee in charge, seeks more funds, as it will be necessary to have more money in order to complete and keep up the work. It is requested remittances be made to her direct. Father Gmelch approves of the work.

The workmen have cleared the paths and driveways and all dead limbs of the many beautiful cedars have been trimmed. All accumulation of rubbish is also to be cleared away. There will be no burning of refuse in the cemetery. It injures the trees and causes damage in many ways. Already the place has been transformed, and visitors will appreciate the excellent work which has, even though in so short a time, been accomplished.

MRS. B. F. TYLER LOSES SISTER.

Many friends of Mrs. B. F. Tyler will sympathize with her in the recent death of her sister, Mrs. M. E. Blair, at her home in Fort Worth, Texas.

The Gulfport Herald carried the following item one afternoon this week:

"Mrs. M. B. McCarley left on the 16th for Fort Worth, Texas, where she was called by the critical illness of her aunt, Mrs. M. E. Blair, who has since died. Mrs. Blair made many warm friends all along the Coast when she visited her sister, Mrs. B. F. Tyler, at Bay St. Louis, many years ago. Mrs. Tyler now resides in the vicinity of Gulfport."

Mrs. Tyler, in deep mourning, is alone in the bosom of her daughter's family, near Gulfport, and finds much comfort in this sanctuary. Mrs. Tyler will be "at home" to her friends later, after the return of her daughter, Mrs. McCarley, who is still in Fort Worth, disposing of the property of Mrs. Blair, who had no relative in that State.

BAY ST. LOUIS LADY IS HONORED WITH RARE DISTINCTION.

Mrs. Nissenson Is Grandmother of Successful Contestant in National Oratorical Contest—Miss Rose Mary Simms Successful.

Mrs. P. Nissenson, of Bay St. Louis, is receiving congratulatory messages from friends locally and from away on the success of her beautiful 17-year-old granddaughter, Miss Rose Mary Simms, of Franklin, La., who has covered heavily in the National School Oratorical Contest, winning the parish, district and State contests, and will next participate nationally.

The young lady's mother, Mrs. Simms, is Mrs. Nissenson's daughter, who has frequently visited here and is no stranger. Louisiana has no fairer and more cultured woman. The following account, from the New Orleans Morning Star, will be read with interest, since it gives the details that are so interesting:

Miss Rose Mary Simms, of St. John's Academy, of Franklin, La., entered the National School Oratorical Contest, sponsored in this territory by the New Orleans Item, has been awarded first place in the final test for Louisiana.

The subject of the winning oration was, "The Constitution of the United States."

She won over the parish, then over the district, and when she went to Baton Rouge, representing the Third District, where she won over the eight districts and now stands Louisiana State champion. She was here awarded the $100 given by the New Orleans Item. She will meet the best from Mississippi, in New Orleans, on April 11, where the winner will receive a silver loving cup, and will go to Kansas City to enter what is known as the Zone Contest.

Whoever is victorious there will go to Washington as the National Champion, of the School Oratorical Contest and have the honor of giving the oration before the President of the United States and the Supreme Court and will receive $4,500.

Miss Simms is the daughter of John Simms and Rose Mary Nissenson, of Franklin, La.

Miss Simms claims New Orleans as her birthplace and it is with eager anticipation that she looks forward to the coming contest. It was in 1903 that she and her parents moved to Franklin, St. Mary parish, where they have since resided.

Miss Simms' charming qualities are really the outgrowth of a cultured home atmosphere, enhanced by a liberal education received at St. John's Academy, under the supervision of the Sisters Mariantes of Holy Cross.

John Simms, this talented young lady's father, is a native of Lamanton, Kentucky. Mr. Simms received his education from the High School of Marion county and St. Mary's College of that State. He is related to the noted Bishop John Lancaster Spalding.

Mrs. Rose Mary Nissenson Simms, Miss Rose Mary's mother, was born in San Francisco, and received her education at the Ursuline Convent, at Nerinx, Kentucky.

—Mr. and Mrs. Joseph O. Mauffray left Thursday morning in their big Buick car for Sanitorium, Miss., where they have gone to visit their nephew, Mr. Roy Pollock, and will remain for short while, possibly visiting Jackson, and looking in on the Legislature before returning home. They were accompanied by Mrs. A. R. Hart, who stopped at Hattiesburg, where she is visiting her sister, Mrs. R. W. Wentworth, and family.

RETURN OF S. S. C. TEAM OCCASION FOR CELEBRATION

(Continued from Page One.)

bred gentlemen—a fact that made everyone in Bay St. Louis proud of them.

Brother Peter, responding to the call, gave a graphic description of the trip, and the game played at Chicago, explaining how the various teams were coupled and eliminated. He declared that the Lady of Lourdes team, of Marinette, Wis., which met defeat at the hands of the Rock-a-Chaws in the first game, had been selected by knowing ones to win the championship; as will be remembered we won by a score of 35 to 22.

Bro. Peter declared that from that game on the Rocka-Chaws were the favorites and when they entered the arena the band played "Dixie" 'mid the shouts of the thousands.

After defeating the St. Louis team, where Jaubert made his wonderful long shot which followed the difficult one caged by Heydel, the fans reached and carried the "Dixie Flashes" (as a Chicago paper called them) off the field on their shoulders.

Winning the Cup.

The trophy winner was left to a secret ballot of the twenty-four officials, and it is a noteworthy fact that St. Stanislaus was given a unanimous vote. The trophy was to be contested for each year, but the officials, with the donor, elected that St. Stanislaus deserved to retain it forever.

Coach Commagere in his address gave his team great credit and declared it made him happy to be associated with such a group of real men. He gave a very good description of the tournament.

Mr. Horace W. Avery, of Detroit, Michigan, spending the winter in Bay St. Louis, was the next and final speaker of the evening. He is one of the charter members of the Detroit Athletic Club; traveled and well versed, and his remarks were happy and felicitous. In conclusion, he said if the team ever visited Detroit they would be personally taken care of by him.

Following the program refreshments were served and at 10 o'clock one of the most delightful evenings had come to an end. It was a splendid reception, fitting in every setting and expression, and marked an epochal event in the history of Bay St. Louis.

Surely there is cause for congratulation all around. The memory of the occasion will never be dimmed by time.

Mayor of Chicago Pays Bay St. Louis and People Graceful Compliment---Text Address.

Mayor Dever's address, delivered Sunday night in the stadium of Loyola University, at Chicago, presenting the Boedecker Cup to the basketball team of St. Stanislaus College, for the best all-round sportsmanship, was well received. It was applauded frequently.

Mayor Dever is quite popular, an able official and good speaker. It was evident it afforded him much pleasure to address the boys from Bay St. Louis. He said in part:

"Ladies and Gentlemen: It is indeed an honor that I am not unmindful of, and it affords me more than ordinary pleasure to address you on this occasion, to deliver to the winners from the sun-kissed and wave-carressed shores of the Mississippi Coast this handsome trophy, known as the Boedecker Cup. It affords me further pleasure to do so, due to the fact that this cup has been unanimously awarded for best sportsmanship of all teams visiting Chicago, some thirty-two in number. I understand, ladies and gentlemen, when the committee, composed of twenty-four members, voted secretly to award this cup, it was found every ballot was for St. Stanislaus College, Bay St. Louis."

At this juncture cheering for S. S. C. became so general the distinguished speaker had to pause.

"It was my pleasure to witness the games," continued the speaker, "and I was not alone in the fact that I was immediately attracted by the clean and sportsmanlike playing of the Mississippians. Readily, they became the pride of the general onlooker, and when the announcement was made that the Boedecker Cup had been unanimously awarded them, there was general satisfaction, and Chicago rejoices tonight with Mississippi.

"It is far away from the Lakes to the Gulf of Mexico, but distance is no factor when I say the two places in the sense in which we are gathered here tonight by thousands of our best people are connected in closer bonds of acquaintanceship and friendship. All the world loves a winner. I want to congratulate these young gentlemen on their manner, which has won for them such distinction; I want to congratulate the faculty of St. Stanislaus College, at Bay St. Louis; I want to congratulate as well the coach and his assistant, who has made all this possible. It is indeed a wonderful aggregation of student-athlete, and successful tutor, and I, like thousands of others feel tonight, are drawn by a something irresistible to visit and to know more of such college as St. Stanislaus and its professors; of Bay St. Louis and its people. My friends, it must be a great place to live in, to be identified with and to be associated with the people."

Of the different trophies presented, Captain Francis Martin, of the S. S. C. team, was the only player who stepped forward to receive the trophy. Coach Forster Commagere, with his well known modesty, kept in the background and sent forth the young leader of the quintette.

Mayor Dever then closed: "Young man, I present your team and your school with the Boedecker Cup. Take it and God bless you. We want to hear from Bay St. Louis again."